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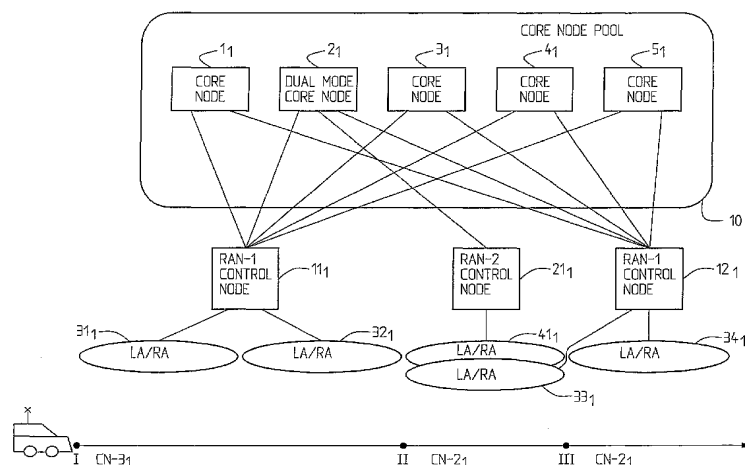
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(54) Title: A SYSTEM, ARRANGEMENT AND A METHOD FOR HANDLING CONNECTION OF A MOBILE STATION MOVING IN COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION OF DATA



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to a communications system supporting communication of data, a method and nodes therein, which comprises a number of core networks with a plurality of core network functional server nodes (core nodes) (SGSN;MSC...) and a number of radio access networks, each with a number of radio access network control nodes (RNC, BSC). At least some of the core nodes are arranged in a pool to, in common, control at least a number of control nodes supporting pooling of core nodes. For a transition of a connection of a mobile station (MS) from a first control node not supporting pooling of core nodes, but served by a first core node belonging to a pool, to a second control node supporting pooling of core nodes, means are provided for enabling the mobile station to remain connected to said first core node forming part of the pool.

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5 A SYSTEM, ARRANGEMENT AND A METHOD FOR HANDLING CONNECTION OF A
MOBILE STATION MOVING IN COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS SUPPORTING
COMMUNICATION OF DATA

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention relates to a communications system
supporting communication of data, which comprises a number of core
networks with a plurality of core network functional server nodes,
also called core nodes, and a number of radio access networks,
each with a number of radio access network control nodes, also
15 called control nodes, wherein at least some of the core nodes are
arranged in a pool to, in common, control at least a number of
control nodes supporting pooling of core nodes. The invention also
relates to a core network functional server node, or a core node,
used in a communication system supporting communication of data,
20 for mobility (and session) management, and which forms part of a
pool of core network functional server nodes which, in common, are
able to serve at least one radio access network, or part of a
radio access network, to which mobile stations can connect over
radio access network control nodes. Still further the invention
25 relates to a method for handling connection of a mobile station
moving in a communication system supporting communication of data,
and comprising a number of core networks with a plurality of core
network functional server nodes, and a number of radio access
networks, each with a number of radio access network control
30 nodes, wherein at least some of the core nodes are arranged in a
pool to, in common, control at least a number of radio access
network control nodes supporting pooling of core nodes.

STATE OF THE ART

Communication systems, particularly wireless communication systems, supporting communication of data or packet data, provide access over a number of radio networks and comprise one or more
5 core networks. Each radio network generally comprises radio network control means comprising a number of radio network control nodes controlling base stations to which user stations or mobile stations can be connected or attached. Generally a radio network control node is controlled by a core network functional server
10 node, in the case of packet data a packet data support node, of a core network. For GPRS GSM/UMTS such a packet data support node is denoted an SGSN (Serving GPRS Support Node). Generally each core node, particularly SGSN, controls one or more radio network control nodes, i.e. it is responsible for such radio network
15 control means, for example RNCs (Radio Network Controller) or BSCs (Base Station Controller). Generally it is fixed which SGSN controls which RNCs. This is often disadvantageous among others since an SGSN has to be dimensioned for the worst case, i.e. a number of subscribers may be roaming within the network in a
20 similar manner at the same time, meaning that an SGSN has to be configured to have a lot of spare capacity, which only is used in such cases. During other circumstances it is a waste of resources. When a subscriber or a mobile station is roaming within the network such that the closest base station will be controlled by
25 another radio network control node than the one he attached to, and the SGSN which is responsible for a particular radio network control node is statically configured, the responsibility for the connection will have to be taken over by another SGSN. This involves a lot of signalling, for example with the home location
30 node of the subscriber or for updating purposes, which means a substantial load on the home location nodes. Furthermore it has been realized that it is very expensive and requires a lot of complicated configurational work to make reconfigurations and/or

to add equipment in such systems. High costs are also involved when such a system needs to be built out or when servers are to be replaced by other servers or SGSNs e.g. in the case of malfunctioning. Moreover it is disadvantageous as far as load sharing and redundancy issues are concerned. For a subscriber who is roaming within the network or changes routing area, responsibility for such a subscriber by a core node will have to be transferred to other core nodes as the subscriber moves throughout the network. This leads to a lot of signalling between the core nodes and home location nodes of the subscriber in order to update involve nodes, for example HLR (Home Location Register) nodes, between concerned core nodes, e.g. SGSNs, and between concerned SGSN and GGSN (Gateway GPRS Support Node), which severely loads the nodes and requires a lot of signalling in general. Therefore the so called pooling concept has been introduced. The pooling concept relates to pooling of core network nodes. As referred to above, a subscriber or a mobile station moving from one routing area handled by for example one SGSN to another routing area handled by another SGSN, will trigger a so called Inter SGSN Routing Area Update (ISRAU). This is described in 3GPP TS 23.060, version 5.6.0, Release 5, section 6.9.1.2.2, Inter SGSN Routing Area Update, the content of which herewith is incorporated herein by reference.

In a pool an SGSN handles a much larger number of routing areas (shared by other SGSNs), and a mobile station or a roaming subscriber, can remain connected to one and the same SGSN as long as it is within the area covered by the pool. This means that a number of SGSNs are responsible for a number of routing areas, or a number of radio network control means, which they control in common and wherein particularly each SGSN is able to control any radio network control means within the pool. The pool concept for pooling of SGSNs and MSCs (Mobile Switching Centers) has been

standardized in 3GPP TS 23.236, Release 5, which herewith also is incorporated herein by reference. Thus, when the pooling concept is implemented, a mobile station will remain connected or attached to one and the same SGSN as long as it is in the geographical area covered by the pool (unless the SGSN is to be taken down or malfunctioning or similar). The allocation of a mobile station to a particular SGSN in a pool can be done in different ways, it may for example be done arbitrarily or randomly, it may be done taking load sharing and/or redundancy into consideration, or consecutive attaching mobile stations may be allocated consecutive SGSNs etc. In principle any algorithm or method for allocating an SGSN (or an MSC) in a pool to a mobile station can be used.

However, not all radio access networks are, or will be, pool enabled, i.e. support pooling of core nodes, and the current development indicates that the GSM RANs will be pool enabled before the UMTS RANs. The situation may also occur that not all radio network control means, e.g. RNCs or BSCs, support the pooling concept even if belonging to one and the same radio access network, i.e. part(s) of a radio access network may support pooling, whereas other part(s) of the same radio access network do not.

Dual mode core nodes, for example dual mode SGSNs, which support for example both GSM and UMTS, are known. This means for example that a dual mode SGSN supporting both GSM and UMTS potentially could be connected to a GSM RAN that supports pooling i.e. the control nodes of which are pool enabled and to an UMTS RAN that is not pool enabled. Similar situations might also occur in multi-vendor scenarios when for example radio network control means, e.g. RNCs or BSCs, of one vendor support pooling whereas those of another do not. Moreover, in most cases UMTS coverage will be introduced as so called "hot spots" on top of existing GSM

coverage. This is illustrated in Fig. 1 in which a pool area of GSM coverage is shown. The area is handled by SGSNs 01-04. Within the pool there are (here) two so called UMTS hot spots. In this scenario every transition between GSM and UMTS (the transitions 2-5 in the figure), as the MS is roaming through the area covered by the pool, will then potentially trigger an ISRAU, since SGSNs 2 and 4 handle the UMTS areas. This means that the benefit of the pooling concept will be limited since the MS in the worst case will perform an ISRAU at each transition instead of staying on one and the same SGSN. Thus, such a situation is today handled by the standardized ISRAU procedure as referred to above and a backward compatibility mechanism (GTP relay, 3GPP TS 23.236) which makes sure that a new SGSN is able to get hold of subscriber data etc. and which is built in into the pool solution. This requires a lot of signalling between SGSNs since there will be a lot of Inter SGSN Routing Area Updates and it is, to a large extent, not possible to take advantage of the pooling concept. A similar situation may also arise when only part of one and the same radio access network is pool enabled. Of course the situation will be the same if an UMTS RAN is pool-enabled whereas a GSM RAN is not etc. For circuit switched communication similar situation will be produced but in that case the core nodes comprise MSCs. Thus, it will under such circumstances not be possible to take advantage of the pooling concept, and a lot of signalling will be required between SGSNs within one and the same pool, a lot of signalling will also be required from SGSNs in a pool towards home location nodes and mobile switching centers, which is clearly disadvantageous.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

What is needed is therefore a system through which advantage can be taken under varying conditions of the pooling concept, i.e. the arrangement of a number of core nodes, such as SGSNs or MSCs, in a

pool. Particularly a system is needed through which advantage of pooling can be taken when part of a radio access network, or radio network control nodes in a part of a radio access network is/are not pool enabled, i.e. do not support pooling of core nodes. A
5 system is also needed through which advantage of pooling can be taken when different radio access networks are provided of which for example one does not support the pooling concept whereas another does. Particularly a system is needed through which the benefits of the pooling concept can be enjoyed in a mixed pool-
10 enabled/non-pool-enabled radio access network environment. A system is also needed through which it gets possible to maintain a mobile station roaming in a network implementing the pooling concept connected to a core node at least under particular circumstances even if there are parts of the radio network or
15 different radio access technologies which do not support pooling. Still further a system is needed through which signalling can be reduced in a network supporting or implementing the pooling concept. Particularly a system is needed through which signalling between core nodes and signalling between core nodes and home
20 location nodes etc. can be reduced as compared to through known solutions. A system is also needed through which the costs can be lowered and bandwidth can be saved for example on links between a pool and home location nodes. Particularly a system is needed through which the benefits of the pooling concept can be increased
25 and more flexibly be taken advantage of under different circumstances.

A core network functional server node (core node), e.g. in this case SGSN and MSC etc. or a packet data support node, is needed
30 through which one or more of the above mentioned objects can be achieved. Still further a method as initially referred to is needed through which one or more of the above mentioned objects can be fulfilled.

Therefore a communication system as initially referred to is provided wherein, for a transition of a connection of a mobile station from a first core network functional server node, in the following denoted first control node not supporting pooling of core nodes, but served by a first core node belonging to a pool, to a second control node supporting pooling of core nodes, the mobile station is able to remain connected to said first core node forming part of the pool.

Particularly the core node comprises means for generating and allocating, to a mobile station connecting/attaching to a first core node, a temporary mobile station identity (temporary MS id) ((P)-TMSI), which temporary mobile station identity further is provided with a pool identification for identifying the core node in the pool to which the core node belongs, and said pool identification is included in a modified mobile station routing/location area update message. The temporary mobile station identity and pool identity is allocated to the mobile station irrespectively of whether the mobile station connects to a (radio network) control node which is pool enabled or not (as long as the core node controlling the control node forms part of the pool). When the mobile station moves from the coverage of the first control node controlled by a first core node to that of the second control node, said modified routing/location area update message including the pool identification is relayed to said first core node. Particularly said transition comprises an intra core node intersystem change. In a particular implementation at least one of the core nodes of the pool comprises a dual-/multimode core node supporting access over more than one radio access network implementing different radio access technologies.

According to one aspect of the present invention said first and second control nodes belong to the same radio access network, wherein a first part of said network does not support pooling and contains said first control node, whereas a second part of said radio access network supports pooling and contains said second control node. In particular implementations said core nodes comprise Serving GPRS Support Nodes (SGSNs) and the control nodes comprise Base Station Controllers (BSCs) for GSM communication and/or Radio Network Controllers (RNCs) for UMTS communication using WCDMA radio access technology.

In other implementations at least some of the core nodes comprise Mobile Switching Centers (MSC) for circuit switched communication, at least some of the control nodes comprising Base Station Controllers (BSCs).

In one implementation said first and second control nodes belong to the same radio access network comprising an UMTS access network or a GSM access network, and part of said UMTS or GSM radio access network does not support pooling of core nodes. In another implementation the first and second control nodes support different radio access technologies and belong to different radio access networks, the first core node comprising a dual access node. In one implementation the first control node is an UMTS RNC not supporting pooling and the second control node is a GSM BSC supporting pooling. In another implementation the first control node is a GSM BSC not supporting pooling whereas the second control node is a UMTS RNC supporting pooling. Advantageously the first core node of a pool allocates a temporary mobile station identity to a connecting/attaching mobile station irrespectively of whether the mobile station connects over a control node supporting pooling of core nodes or to a control node not supporting pooling of core nodes. Particularly the temporary

mobile station identity comprises a ((P)-TMSI) modified in that a pool identification e.g. comprising a Network Resource Identification (NRI, Network Resource Identifier) is included. Particularly said pool identification, e.g. NRI, is included in a
5 mobile station routing/location area update message provided to the second control node as the mobile station moves from the area covered by the first control node to that covered by the second control node. Particularly the first core node uses the Gb-flex/Iu-flex mechanism (cf. 3GPP TS 23.228, v.5.2.0., Release
10 5) for allocating a temporary mobile station identity comprising pool unique identity irrespectively of whether the radio access networks or part of networks are not Iu-flex/Gb-flex enabled.

Therefore the invention also provides a core network functional
15 server node (core node) as initially referred to, which comprises means for, at the transition of a connection/attachment of a mobile station from a first control node not supporting pooling of core nodes to another, second, control node supporting pooling of
20 core nodes, keeping the mobile station connected/attached to said first core node. Particularly said means comprises means for generating and allocating and using a received temporary mobile station identity further comprising a pool identification for identifying the core node in the pool to which a core node belongs. Particularly the temporary mobile station identity is
25 generated and allocated irrespectively of whether the mobile station is connected/attached to a control node supporting pooling of core nodes or not. Particularly said temporary mobile station identity is contained in a routing/location area update message received/relayed from a second control node enabling keeping the
30 mobile station connected to the (first) core node. Particularly a mobile station transition from a first to a second control node comprises an intra core-intersystem change. Particularly the first core node comprises a dual/multi- mode core node supporting access

over more than one radio access network, wherein the at least two radio access networks implement different radio access technologies. Particularly the node comprises a Service GPRS Support Node (SGSN). Alternatively it comprises a Mobile Switching Center (MSC). Particularly the node uses the Gb-flex mechanism or the Iu-flex mechanism for allocating a modified temporary mobile identity (with pool identity) to a mobile station and the transition comprises an intra SGSN intersystem change.

The invention therefore also suggests a method as initially referred to, which comprises the step of; for a mobile station moving from a first routing/location area in which it is connected to a radio access network control node not supporting pooling of core nodes but served by a first core node forming part of the pool, to a second routing/location area controlled by a radio access network control node supporting pooling of core nodes, keeping the mobile station connected to said first core node at least until the mobile station enters a routing/location area controlled by a radio network control node not supporting pooling of core nodes. Particularly the method comprises the steps of; allocating a temporary mobile station identity provided with a pool identification to a mobile station connecting to a first radio network access control node served by a core node of the pool, irrespectively of whether the first radio access network control node supports pooling of server nodes or not; including the pool identification in the message relating to change/updating of routing/location area when the mobile station moves to a routing/location area covered by a second radio access network control node supporting pooling of core nodes; relaying the routing/location area change/updating message to the first core node.

Particularly the first and second radio access network control nodes belong to the same radio access network and implement the same radio access technology. Particularly the first core node comprises a dual/multimode access node supporting at least two
5 radio access technologies. In one implementation the first control node is an UMTS RNC and the second control node is a GSM BSC. In an alternative implementation the first control node is a GSM BSC whereas the second control node is an UMTS RNC. Particularly the first and second core nodes are SGSNs. In an alternative
10 implementation said first and second core nodes comprise mobile switching centers (MSC).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will in the following be more thoroughly described,
15 in a non-limiting manner, and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 2 shows an embodiment with a first radio access network supporting pooling of core nodes and a second radio access
20 network not supporting pooling of core nodes,

Fig. 3 shows an embodiment of the invention in which a part of a radio access network is not pool enabled even if core nodes controlling it are arranged in a pool,
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Fig. 4 shows an embodiment in which a GSM radio access network is pool enabled whereas a UMTS radio access network is not pool enabled, the pool comprising a dual access SGSN,

30 Fig. 5 is a figure similar to Fig. 4 but for circuit switched communication and wherein the core nodes arranged in a pool comprise MSCs,

Fig. 6 is a figure illustrating a UMTS pool with two dual access mode SGSNs wherein a GSM radio access network is not pool enabled,

5 Fig. 7 is a sequence diagram illustrating, in a simplified manner, the sequence when a mobile station moves into a hotspot (UMTS) not supporting pooling of SGSNs, and the sequence when the mobile station leaves a hot spot not supporting pooling, entering a GSM pool,

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Fig. 8 is a flow diagram describing an exemplary scenario when a mobile station changes routing area in a network with pooled core nodes but wherein part of the radio access network control nodes are not pool enabled, and

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Fig. 9 is a flow diagram describing an example of a scenario when a mobile station moves in a network with pooled core nodes and in which there is one radio access network with pool enabled control nodes and one radio access network with non-pool enabled control nodes.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Fig. 2 shows a pool of core nodes 1_1 , 2_1 , 3_1 , 4_1 , 5_1 . Core node 2_1 is a dual access mode core node supporting access by two different radio access networks using different radio access technologies, here RAN-1 and RAN-2. Each radio access network, here RAN-1 and RAN-2, comprises a number of base stations (not shown) controlled by radio network control means, here RAN-1 control node 11_1 , RAN-1 control node 12_1 and RAN-2 control node 21_1 . The core nodes in the pool share the responsibility for the control of radio access network RAN-1, which here means that any core node of the pool is able to control any one of the radio network control nodes 11_1 , 12_1 of RAN-1. In this embodiment all core nodes are provided in a

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common pool. However, a pool may comprise more than two sites, there may also be more than one pool etc. It is in this context referred to the Swedish Patent Application with the application number 0003719-2 filed on October 13, 2000 by the same applicant.

5 This document is herewith incorporated herein by reference.

However, in this particular embodiment RAN-2, or the control node 21₁, does not support pooling of core nodes, i.e. it is not pool enabled. RAN-2 control node 21₁ can in this embodiment only be controlled by dual mode core node 2₁. RAN-1 control node 11₁ here controls location/routing (LA/RA) areas 31₁, LA/RA 32₁, whereas RAN-1 control node 12₁ controls routing area LA/RA 34₁ and LA/RA 33. RAN-2 control node 21₁ controls LA/RA 41₁. It is here supposed that a mobile station MS is moving through the network.

10 Upon entering the common pool area served by core nodes included in the core node pool 10, it is here supposed that it enters LA/RA 31₁ handled by RAN-1 11₁. Since RAN-1 control node 11₁ is a pool enabled control node, any one of core nodes 1₁-5₁ is able to control RAN-1 control node 11₁, or the mobile station MS. Which core node that is selected depends on the used algorithm, e.g. taking load sharing into consideration or an arbitrary core node can be selected. Here it is supposed that core node 3₁ has been selected. MS then remains connected to CN 3₁ when it moves through LA/RA 31₁ and LA/RA 32₁. However the mobile station leaves LA/RA 32₁, and at II it enters routing area LA/RA 41₁ controlled by RAN-2 control node 21₁, which is not pool enabled. This transition will trigger an ISRAU as standardized in 3GPP TS 23.060, Section 6.9.1.2.2 describing the ISRAU procedure and the MS will be transferred to dual mode core node CN 2₁ instead, which always handles RAN-2 control node 21₁. This is here the only node that can control RAN-2 control node. However, the MS proceeds through the network and at III leaves LA/RA 41₁ to enter LA/RA 34₁ handled by RAN-1 control node 12₁. RAN-1 control node 12₁ however is pool

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enabled. This means that the MS can stay connected to the preceding core node which was dual mode core node 2_1 and instead of an ISRAU the transition III comprises an intra core node inter-system change. This is possible since, when the mobile station connects/attaches at I, wherein a connect/attach request is received from MS in RAN-1 control node 11_1 , and when core node 3_1 has been selected, core node 3_1 allocates a temporary mobile station identity, e.g. ((P)-TMSI) to the mobile station which includes a unique identity of the core node within the core node pool 10 which is unique for that pool. This identity may for example comprise a network resource identity, NRI, which is included as a part of the, here by core node 3_1 , generated and allocated mobile station temporary identity. This makes it possible when the MS moves from the coverage of RAN-1 to the coverage of RAN-2, and from the coverage of RAN-2 to the coverage of RAN-1, for RAN-1 control node 12_1 to find the unique pool core node identity, e.g. NRI, in the MS routing area update message, and to relay this message to the core node to which the mobile station previously was connected, in this case the dual mode core node 2_1 . Thus, when the mobile station returns to a control node that is pool enabled, the MS can remain connected to the same core node as it was connected to when it was under control of a non-pool enabled control node. Although, in this particular embodiment the MS first attached/connected to a control node (11_1) that was pool enabled, in which case it always would be allocated a temporary MS identity with information about the pool identity, also in case a mobile station first connected/attached to a control node which was not pool enabled, also the unique core node identity within the pool would have been added, enabling the MS to remain with the preceding core node when moving from a control node which is not pool enabled, to a pool enabled control node, according to the inventive concept. This means that for a considerable number of the transitions between a non-core enabled

radio access network and a core enabled radio access network, no ISRAUs will be due, which means that the signalling between the core nodes within the pool will be considerably reduced as well as the signalling between the pooled nodes and other network nodes such as switching nodes, gateway nodes and home location nodes will be considerably reduced.

Fig. 3 shows an embodiment with a core node pool 20 comprising a number of core nodes CN 1₂, 2₂, 3₂, 4₂. The intention with this figure is to illustrate an embodiment in which part of a network does not support pooling, i.e. part of one and the same radio access network, here RAN-1 is pool enabled whereas another part of RAN-1 is not pool enabled. Here it is supposed that the part of RAN-1 that is not pool enabled, is controlled by control node 12₂ responsible for routing area 32₃, whereas control nodes 11₂, 13₂ are pool enabled and responsible for location/routing areas LA/RA 31₂ and 33₃ respectively. In this embodiment the core node pool does not comprise any dual mode access node. Of course, also in this case there might be a dual mode access node, but it is not necessary. Like in Fig. 2 it is here supposed that the mobile station MS moves through the network, from LA/RA 31₂, to LA/RA 32₃ and to LA/RA 33₃. When it attaches/connects over RAN-1 control node 11₂, it is here supposed that core node CN 2₂ is selected in agreement with the relevant criteria or the relevant algorithm as discussed above. At I MS enters LA/RA 31₂ and at II MS leaves LA/RA 31₂ and enters LA/RA 32₃ controlled by the control node 12₂ which is not pool enabled. Then, as in the preceding case, e.g. an ISRAU is due, and MS is connected to CN 4₂ instead of CN 2₂ which is the fixed core node controlling control node 12₂. However, for the mobile station the transition from LA/RA 32₃ to LA/RA 33₃, III, no ISRAU (for example) is needed, since already upon entry of the pool area the MS had been allocated a temporary mobile station identity, with pool identity (e.g. ((P)TMSI with NRI) and MS can

remain connected to CN 4₂. It should be clear that, even if MS had entered the pool area at LA/RA 32₃, CN 4₂ would have generated and allocated a temporary mobile station identity and included the core node unique pool identity, even if control node 12₂ is not pool enabled, thus enabling that, when moving to LA/RA 33₃ or to LA/RA 31₂, MS could have remained with CN 4₂.

Fig. 4 shows an embodiment with a GSM pool 30 in which a number of SGSNs are provided, here SGSN-1 1₃, SGSN-2 2₃, dual mode SGSN-3 3₃ and SGSN-4 4₃. It is here supposed that the GSM radio access network is pool enabled whereas an UMTS radio access network is not. It is also supposed that UMTS coverage is introduced as "hot spot" on top of existing GSM coverage. Control nodes BSC-1 11₃, BSC-2 12₃ control GSM RAN routing areas RA 31₃, 32₃, 34₃ and 33₃ whereas UMTS RAN is controlled by control node RNC 21₃ responsible for RA 41₃. Since RNC 21₃ is not pool enabled, it can only be controlled by dual mode SGSN-3 3₃ whereas SGSNs 1₃, 2₃, 3₃, 4₃ in common control BSC-1 11₃ and BSC-2 12₃. It should of course be clear that in a real implementation there are far more control nodes, more routing areas and generally more core nodes, but for reasons of clarity such are not illustrated. It is here supposed that the dual mode SGSN-3 3₃ uses the Gb-flex mechanism relating to pooling for GSM between BSC/SGSN for allocating a P-TMSI (Temporary MS Id) to a mobile station even if the UMTS radio access network is not Iu-flex enabled. The unique identification of a core node in the SGSN pool 30 (particularly Network Resource Id, NRI) is, as referred to above, included as a part of the, by the SGSN generated, P-TMSI. In that manner, when the mobile station moves from UMTS to GSM coverage, i.e. from being controlled by RNC 21₃ to being controlled by BSC-2 12₃, BSC-2 12₃ will find the NRI in the MS routing area update message and relay the message to the preceding SGSN to which the MS was connected, i.e. to the same SGSN as the MS already is connected to (here

SGSN-3). This means that the transition from UMTS to GSM coverage will result in an intra SGSN intersystem change instead of an ISRAU as discussed above. Of course, for the opposite situation, when UMTS radio access network is pool enabled and the GSM radio access network is not, the same principle is valid. As discussed above, the functioning will be the same also when part of for example a GSM (UMTS) radio access network is pool enabled, cf. Fig. 3. When the mobile station moves to a non-pool enabled control node (BSC or RNC) if the same or different radio access systems are concerned, an ISRAU is likely when the SGSN changes, whereas when the MS returns to a pool enabled control node, e.g. BSC or RNC, the MS can remain connected to one and the same SGSN also after the transition.

Fig. 5 shows an implementation of the inventive concept to circuit switched communication. It is here supposed that a number of core nodes, here comprising MSC-1 1₄, MSC-2 2₄, dual mode access node MSC-3 3₄ and MSC-4 4₄ are arranged in a GSM pool 40. MSCs 1₄, 2₄, 3₄, 4₄ in common control BSC-1 11₄ and BSC-2 12₄, whereas dual access MSC-3 3₄ is responsible for RNC 21₄. BSC-1 11₄ here controls LAs 31₄, 32₄ whereas BSC-2 12₄ controls LA 34₄, and LA 33₄, whereas RNC 21₄ controls LA 41₄. It is here supposed that MS upon entry of LA 31₄ via BSC-1 11₄ is connected to MSC-4 4₄ and that MSC-4 4₄ generates a TMSI with pool identity and allocates it to MS. At II a core node change to MSC-3 3₄ is required. When a MS moves from LA 41₄ where it is controlled by RNC 21₄ served by MSC-3 3₄, to LA 34₄, MS remains connected to dual access node MSC-3 3₄. In other aspects the functioning is similar to that described with reference to Figs. 2-4 and irrespectively of to which MSC an MS is connected upon connection/attach, i.e. irrespectively of whether the control node is pool enabled or not, i.e. here RNC 21₄ is not pool enabled, a temporary mobile station identity including unique

pool identity, here unique MSC identity within the pool identity, is generated and allocated to the MS.

Fig. 6 shows still another embodiment wherein a number of core nodes are arranged in, here, an UMTS pool 50 which comprises dual mode SGSN-1 1₅, SGSN-2 2₅, dual mode SGSN-3 3₅ and SGSN-4 4₅. This embodiment differs from preceding illustrated embodiments in that the pool comprises two dual mode core nodes, with the intention to illustrate that a pool of course not is limited to but one dual mode core node; on the contrary there may be more than one dual mode core node, all core nodes may be dual mode core nodes etc. Any variation is possible within the scope of the appended claims. Here RNC-1 21₅ handles RA 41₅, RNC-2 22₅ handles RA 42₅ and 43₅ and BSC-1 11₅ handles RA 31₅. Core nodes 1₅-4₅ in common control RNCs 21₅ and 22₅ whereas BSC-1 11₅ can be controlled by dual mode SGSN-1 1₅ and dual mode SGSN-3 3₅. Thus, in this embodiment, BSC-1 is pool enabled in so far that it can be controlled by dual mode SGSN-1 1₅ and dual mode SGSN-3 3₅. One example is given for an MS moving from RA 41₅, where SGSN 2₅ has been selected according to the relevant criteria or the relevant algorithm. When MS enters routing area 31₅ controlled by BSC-1 11₅, is supposed that SGSN 1₅ is selected. However, when MS moves on into RA 43₅, it remains connected to SGSN 1₅ according to the principles described with reference to Figs. 2-5.

Fig. 7 is a simplified sequence diagram illustrating (above the dashed line) the sequence when a mobile station MS moves into e.g. an UMTS hot spot which is not pool enabled and, below the dashed line, the sequence when the MS leaves the UMTS hot spot and enters a GSM pool enabled radio access network. Thus, it is first supposed that mobile station MS sends a routing area update request, 1, to UMTS RNC. The RNC then sends a routing area update request to the dual access SGSN, it here has no other choice, 2.

The dual access SGSN fetches information from the old SGSN (to which the MS previously was connected) and updates the home location node, HLR (Home Location Register) and the relevant GGSN (Gateway GPRS Support Node), 3. The old SGSN thus provides
5 information to dual access SGSN. Subsequently the dual access SGSN sends a routing area update accept with P-TMSI with NRI, according to the inventive concept, to the RNC, 4. RNC then sends a routing area update accept including P-TMSI with NRI, to the mobile station.

10 Subsequently, it is supposed that, in this case, an ISRAU was required and that there was a change of SGSNs from SGSN to the dual access SGSN. Below the dashed line, it is supposed that the mobile station leaves the hot spot. The MS sends a routing area
15 update request (including the P-TMSI with NRI received from RNC) to the relevant BSC, 1'. The BSC then sends a routing area update request to the dual access SGSN, since information to that effect was given by NRI, 2'. The dual access SGSN then sends a routing area update accept (with P-TMSI with NRI) to the BSC, 3', which
20 subsequently sends a routing area update accept with P-TMSI with NRI to the mobile station, 4'. Thus, when leaving the hot spot, no SGSN change is required.

Fig. 8 is a flow diagram describing one example on a possible
25 scenario (here for packet switched (PS) communication) when a mobile station enters a pool area and subsequently performs a routing area change indicated through the dashed line. Thus, it is here supposed that an attach request from an MS entering a pool area is received in RNC 1 controlling routing area RA 1 of a radio
30 access network denoted RAN 1, 100. It is then examined whether RNC 1 is pool enabled, 101. If not, the SGSN responsible for controlling RNC 1 is selected, by necessity e.g. SGSN X2, 101A. If however RNC 1 is pool enabled, an SGSN, e.g. SGSN X1, is selected

from the pool according to the relevant algorithm, 102. Of course any algorithm can be used for the selection of the appropriate SGSN. Subsequently, irrespectively of whether RNC 1 was pool enabled or not, a mobile station identity, e.g. P-TMSI with unique pool identity e.g. NRI, is generated and allocated to the MS, 103. It should be clear that the procedure when an attach request or connection request has been sent to the selected SGSN server includes more steps among others including that the SGSN has to accept etc. However, such steps do not have any influence on the inventive concept and are therefore not included in this flow.

At a later stage it is supposed that the MS changes routing area RA, as indicated through the dashed line in the Figure. Thus, the MS changes routing area and sends a routing area update request with P-TMSI with NRI to, here, RNC 2 belonging to the same radio access network RAN 1 as RNC 1. It is then examined if RNC 2 is pool enabled, 105. If not, the routing area update request is sent to the SGSN controlling RNC 2, e.g. SGSN X3, 105A. If, however, RNC 2 is pool enabled, RNC 2 uses NRI to send the routing area update request to SGSN X1 (or X2), 106. SGSN X1/X2 then sends a routing area update accept (on condition that it accepts), with P-TMSI with NRI to RNC 2, 107. RNC 2 forwards the routing area update accept to the MS, 108. It should be clear that this flow shows one particular plausible scenario, the important thing being that the unique pool identity is generated together with P-TMSI and provided irrespectively of whether an MS connects to, here, an RNC which is pool enabled or not, and that this information subsequently can be used when a mobile station leaves an, here, RNC which is not pool enabled. It thus relates to an implementation in which a part of one and the same radio access network does not support pooling of core nodes, here particularly SGSNs.

Fig. 9 is a further flow diagram illustrating a scenario (here for PS communication) in which there are two different radio access radio networks of which one, RAN 1, is pool enabled whereas the other, RAN 2, is not, and in which the mobile station changes routing area RA twice, indicated through the dashed lines in the flow. Thus, it is supposed that an attach request from a mobile station entering the pool area is received in BSC 1 controlling routing area RA 1 of RAN 1, 200. It is established whether BSC 1 is pool enabled, 201. If not, the SGSN controlling BSC 1 is selected, i.e. an attach request is sent here to SGSN Y3, 201A. If however BSC 1 is pool enabled, it is supposed that for example SGSN Y1 from the pool is selected according to the relevant algorithm, 202. In both cases, i.e. if BSC 1 was pool enabled or if BSC 1 was not, a P-TMSI with unique pool identity (NRI) is generated and allocated to the mobile station, 203.

Subsequently it is supposed that the mobile station changes routing areas from RA 1 to RA 3 controlled by RNC 4 of the other radio access network RAN 2. A routing area update request with P-TMSI with NRI is then sent to (here) RNC 4, 204. It is then established if RNC 4 is pool enabled, 205. If not, it is established if SGSN Y1/Y3 is a dual access mode SGSN, 205A. If not, a dual mode SGSN is selected, e.g. SGSN Y2, 205C. If yes, the MS remains connected to SGSN Y1. If however RNC 4 was pool enabled, a routing area update request is sent to SGSN Y2 controlling RNC 4, (here SGSN Y2 is supposed be a dual mode SGSN), 206. (If, in step 201A, another SGSN (Y3) had to be selected since BSC 1 was not pool enabled, the routing area update request was sent to SGSN Y3 instead.) The MS is then connected to SGSN Y2 (c.f. step 201A), 207 following the ISRAU procedure.

Subsequently it is supposed that the MS once more changes routing area from RA 3 controlled by RNC 4 to RA 2 controlled by BSC 2

(which is pool enabled), of RAN 1. Routing area update request with P-TMSI and NRI is then sent to BSC 2, 208. BSC 2 uses NRI to send a routing area update request to SGSN Y2 (dual mode SGSN), 209. SGSN Y2 sends an accept with P-TMSI and NRI, to BSC 2, 210, and BSC 2 forwards the accept to the MS, 211.

It should be clear that this merely is one particular scenario intended to illustrate the inventive concept.

When referring to routing areas in Figs. 7 and 9, it should be clear that for CS circuit switched communication, LAs would be indicated instead.

The invention is of course not limited to the particular illustrated embodiments and scenarios, but it can be varied in a number of ways, and it can be implemented in different systems etc. and further that the pools may be constituted in various different ways and that there may also be more than just two radio access networks involved, the inventive concept still is applicable.

CLAIMS

- 5 1. A communications system supporting communication of data and comprising a number of core networks with a plurality of core network functional server nodes (core nodes) (SGSN; MSC...) and a number of radio access networks, each with a number of radio access network control nodes (RNC, BSC), wherein at least some of
10 the core nodes are arranged in a pool to, in common, control at least a number of control nodes supporting pooling of core nodes, characterized in that for a transition of a connection of a mobile station (MS) from a first control node not supporting pooling of core nodes but
15 served by a first core node belonging to a pool, to a second control node supporting pooling of core nodes, means are provided for enabling the mobile station to remain connected to said first core node forming part of the pool.
- 20 2. A communication system according to claim 1, characterized in said means generates/allocates for a mobile station connecting to a first core node, a temporary mobile station identity (temporary MS id) ((P)-TMSI), said temporary mobile station identity
25 including a pool identification (NRI) for uniquely identifying the core node in the pool to which the core node belongs, that said pool identification is included in a modified mobile station routing/location area update message, and in that when the mobile station moves from the coverage of the first control node to the
30 coverage of the second control node, said modified routing/location area update message including the pool identification is relayed to said first core node from said second control node.

3. A communication system according to claim 2,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that said transition provides an intra core node intersystem
change.

5

4. A communication system according to any one of claims 1-3,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that at least one of the core nodes of the pool comprises a dual-/
multimode core node supporting access over more than one radio
10 access network, said radio access networks implementing different
radio access techniques.

5. A communication system according to any one of claims 1-4,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

15 that said first and second control nodes belong to the same radio
access network, a first part of which not supporting pooling and
containing said first control node and a second part of which
supporting pooling and containing said second control node.

20 6. A communication system according to any one of the preceding
claims,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that the core nodes comprise Serving GPRS Support Nodes (SGSNs)
and in that the control nodes comprise Base Station Controllers
25 (BSCs) for GSM communication and/or Radio Network Controllers
(RNCs) for UMTS communication using WCDMA radio access technology.

7. A communication system according to any one of the preceding
claims,

30 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that at least some core nodes comprise Mobile Switching Centers
(MSC) for circuit switched communication and in that at least some
of the control nodes are Base Station Controllers (BSCs).

8. A system according to any one of the preceding claims,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that said first and second control nodes belong to the same radio
5 access network comprising a radio access network (RAN) for e.g.
UMTS or GSM and in that a part of said UMTS RAN or GSM RAN does
not support pooling of core nodes.

9. A system according to claim 4 and any one of claims 1-3,6,
10 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that the first and second control nodes support different radio
access technologies, and in that the first node comprises a dual
mode access node.

15 10. A system according to claim 9,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that the first control node is an UMTS RNC not supporting pooling
of core nodes, and in that the second control node is a GSM BSC
support pooling of core nodes.

20 11. A system according to claim 9,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that the first control node is a GSM BSC not supporting pooling of
core nodes, and in that the second control node is a UMTS RNC node
25 supporting pooling of core nodes.

12. A system according to any one of claims 1-11,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that the first core node of a pool allocates a temporary mobile
30 station identity ((P)-TMSI) with pool identification (NRI) to a
connecting/attaching mobile station irrespectively of whether the
mobile station connects to a control node supporting pooling of

core nodes or to a control node not supporting pooling of core nodes.

13. A system according to claim 12,

5 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that the temporary mobile station comprises a (P)-TMSI modified in that it is extended with a pool identification comprising e.g. NRI (Network Resource id).

10 14. A system according to claim 13,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that said pool identification (NRI) is included in mobile station (MS) Routing/Location Area Update messages provided to the second control node.

15

15. A system according to claim 13 or 14,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that the first core node uses the Gb-flex/Iu-flex mechanism for allocating a temporary mobile station identity comprising pool
20 unique identity irrespectively of either of the radio access networks (parts of networks) is not Iu-flex/Gb-flex enabled.

16. A core network functional server node used in (a) communication system(s) supporting communication of data for
25 mobility (and session management), and forming part of a pool of core network functional server nodes, in common able to serve at least one, or part of a, radio access network to which a mobile station may connect over a radio access network control node,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

30 that the core node comprises means for, at a transition of a connection/attachment of a mobile station (MS) from a first control node not supporting pooling of core nodes to another,

second, control node supporting pooling of core nodes, keeping the mobile station connected to said first core node.

17. A core node according to claim 16,

5 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that said means comprises means for generating and allocating a temporary mobile station identity further comprising a pool identification for uniquely identifying the core node in the pool to which the said core node belongs.

18. A core node according to claim 17,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that the temporary mobile station identity is generated and allocated upon entering the area served by any core node forming part of the pool irrespectively of whether the mobile station is connected to a control node supporting pooling of core nodes or not.

19. A core node according to claim 18,

20 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that said temporary mobile station identity is included in a routing/location area update message received/relayed from a second control node to the first core node enabling keeping the mobile station connected to the (first) core node.

20. A core node according to claim 19,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that a mobile station transition from a first to a second control node comprises an intra core-intersystem change.

21. A core node according to any one of claims 16-20,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that the (first) core node comprises a dual/multi mode core node supporting access over at least two radio access network implementing different radio access technologies.

5 22. A core node according to any one of claims 16-21,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that it comprises a Serving GPRS Support Node (SGSN).

10 23. A core node according to any one of claims 16-21,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that it comprises a Mobile Switching Center (MSC).

24. A core node according to claim 21,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
15 that it uses the Gb-flex mechanism or the Iu-flex mechanism for
allocating a modified temporary mobile identity including a pool
identification to a mobile station and in that the transition
comprises an intra SGSN intersystem change.

20 25. A method for handling connection of a mobile station moving in
a communication system supporting communication of data, and
comprising a number of core networks with a plurality of core
network functional server nodes (core nodes) and a number of radio
access networks, each with a number of radio access network
25 control nodes, at least some of the core nodes being arranged in a
pool to, in common, control at least a number of radio access
network control nodes supporting pooling of core nodes,
c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n
that it comprises the step of: for a mobile station moving from a
30 first routing area in which it is connected to a radio access
network control node not supporting pooling of core nodes, but
served by a first core node forming part of the pool, to a second

routing/location area controlled by a radio access network control node supporting pooling of core nodes,

- keeping the mobile station connected to said first core node at least until the mobile station again enters a routing/location area controlled by a radio network control node not supporting pooling of core nodes.

26. A method according to claim 25,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that it comprises the steps of:

- allocating a temporary mobile station identity provided with a pool identification, to a mobile station connecting to first a radio network access control node, served by a core node of the pool, irrespectively of whether the first radio access network control node supports pooling of core nodes or not;
- including the pool identification in the message relating to change/updating of routing/location area when the mobile station moves to a routing/location area covered by a second radio access network control node supporting pooling of core nodes;
- relaying the routing/location area change/updating message to the first core node from the second radio access network control node.

27. A method according to claim 26,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that said first and second radio access network control nodes belong to the same radio access network and implement the same radio access technology.

28. A method according to claim 25 or 26,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that the first core node comprises a dual/multimode access node supporting at least two radio access technologies.

29. A method according to claim 28,

5 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that the first control node is an UMTS RNC and that the second control node is a GSM BSC or vice versa.

30. A method according to any one of claims 25-29,

10 c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

that the first and second core nodes are SGSN:s.

31. A method according to any one of claims 25-28,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d i n

15 that said first and second core node respectively comprises a mobile switching center (MSC).

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STATE OF THE ART

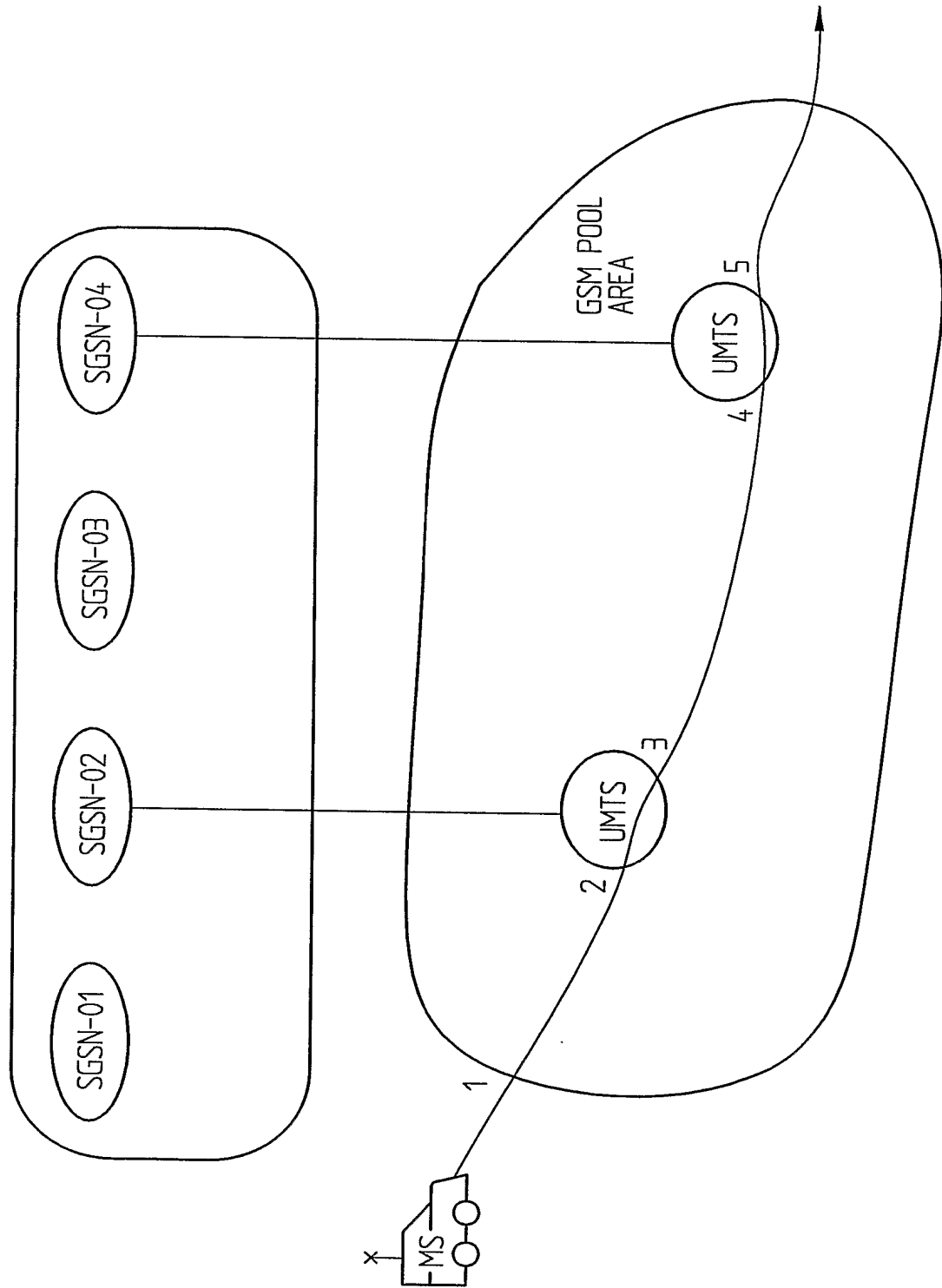


Fig. 1

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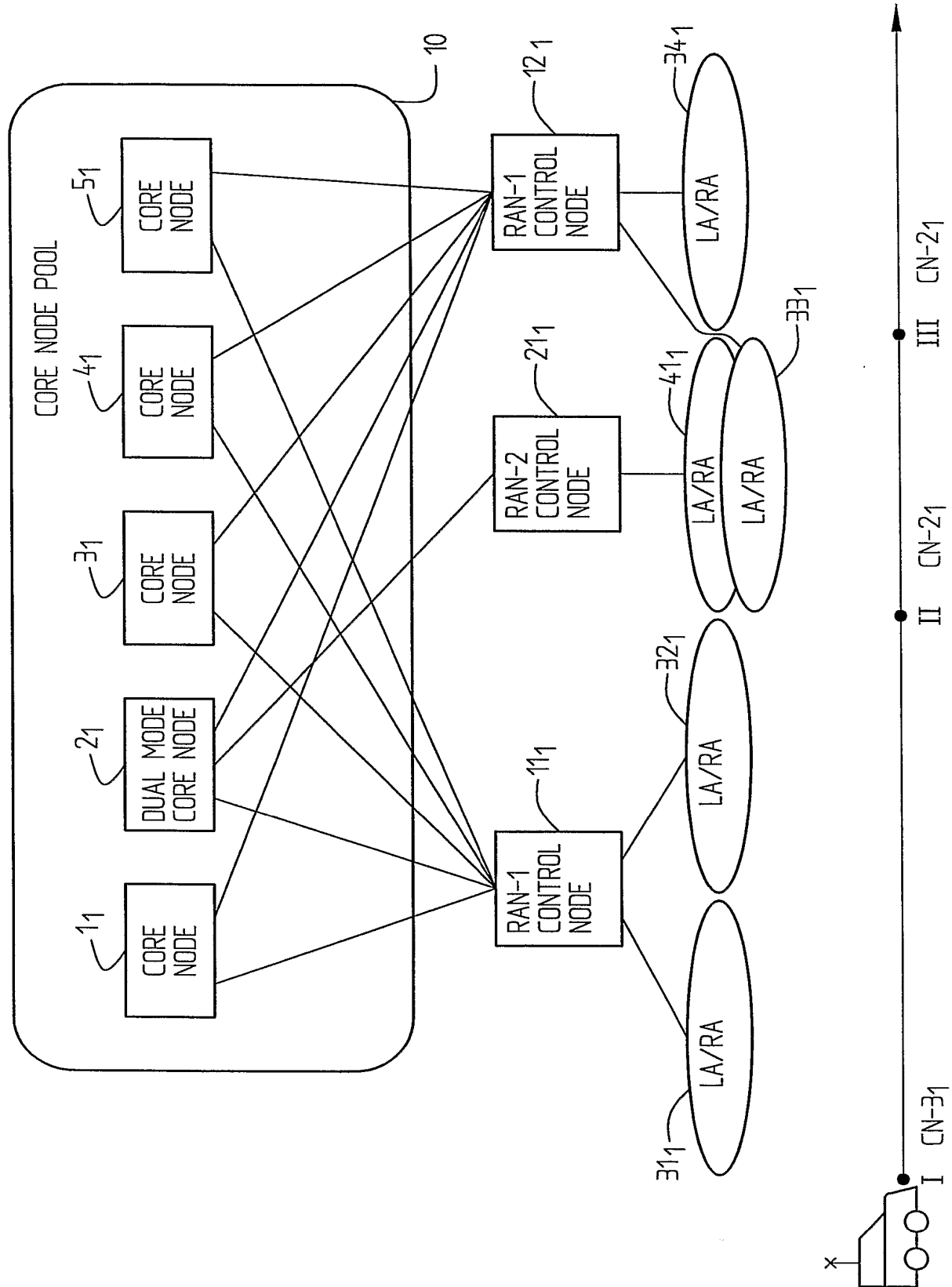


Fig. 2

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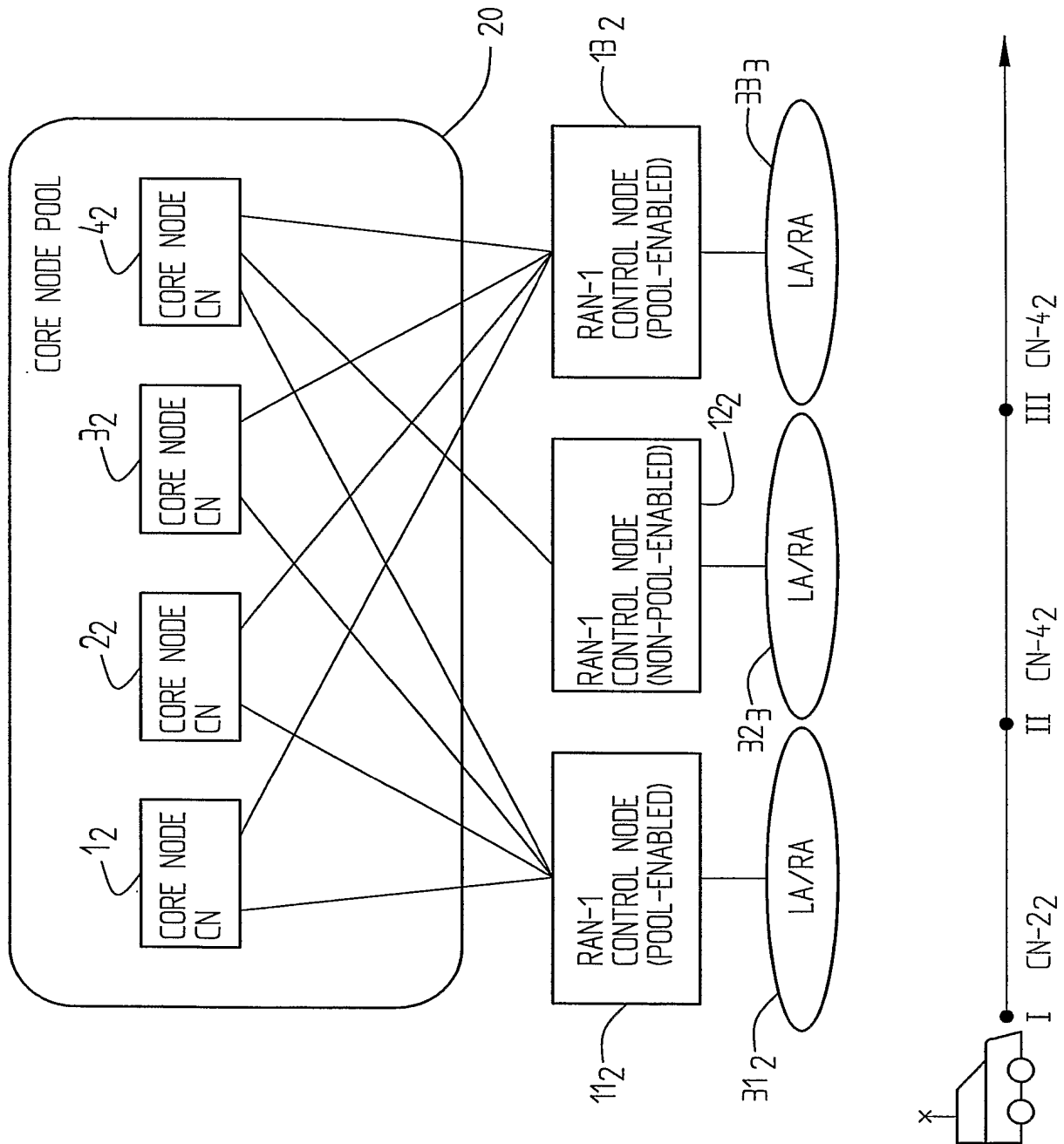


Fig.3

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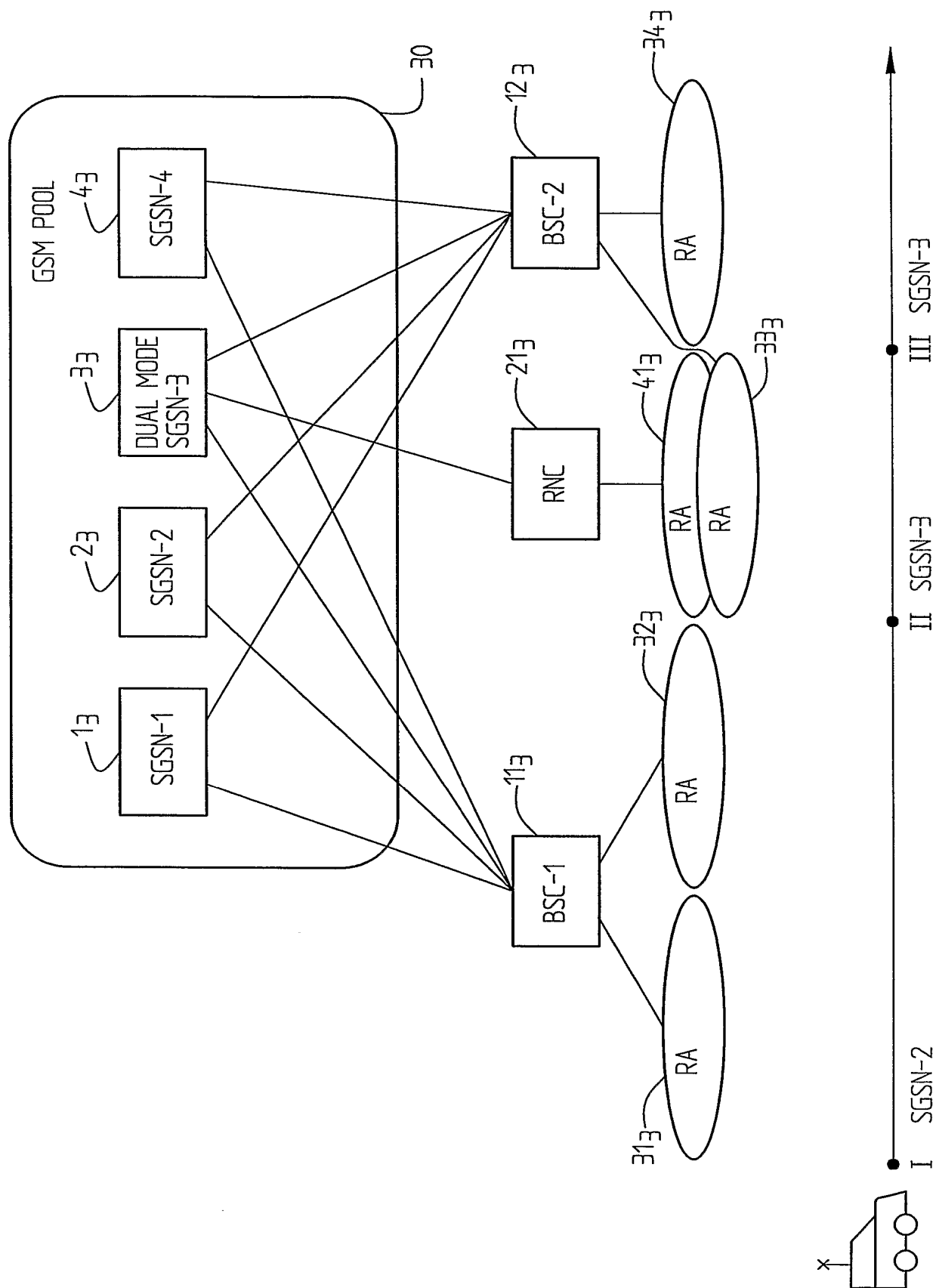


Fig. 4

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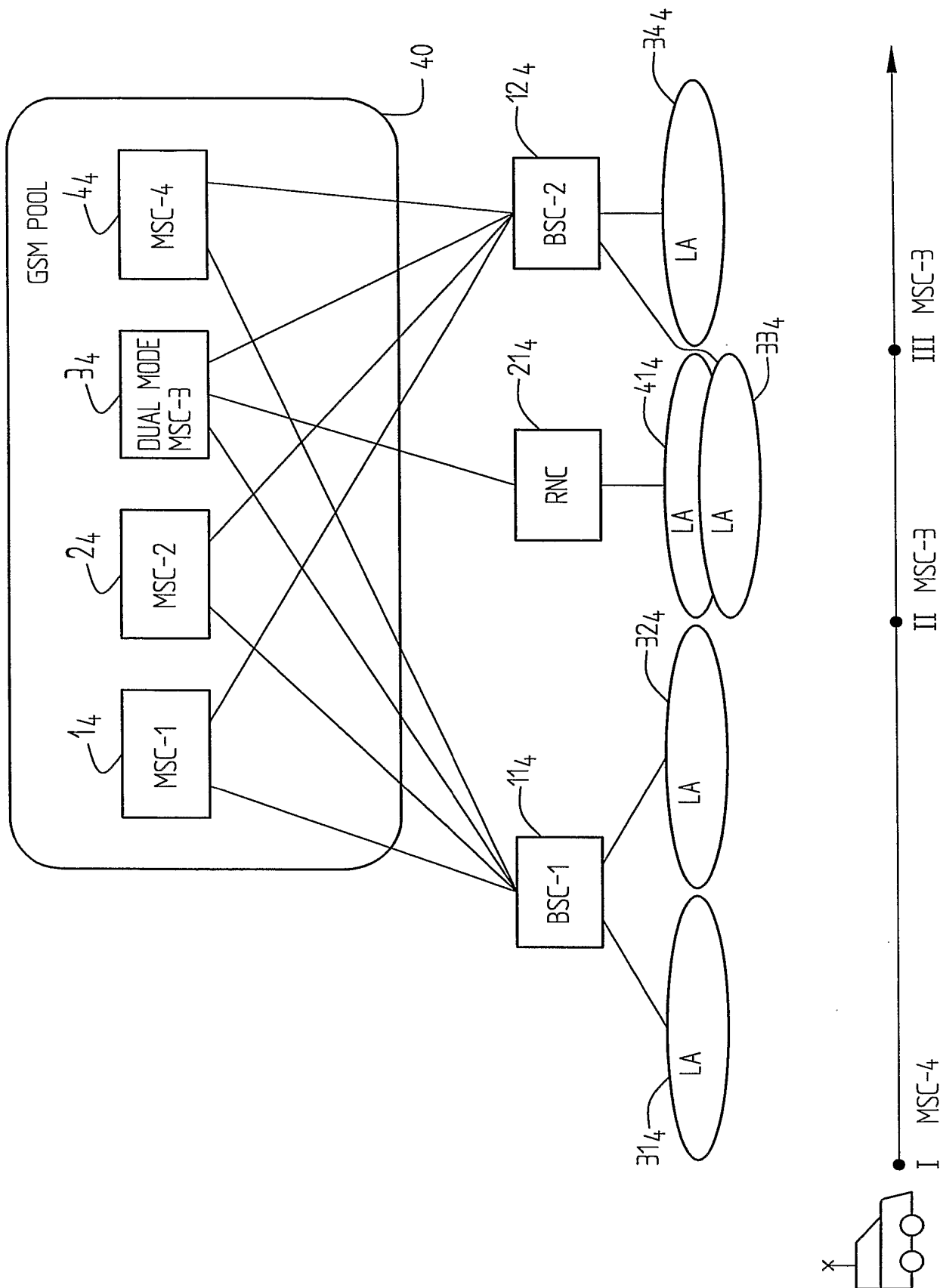


Fig. 5

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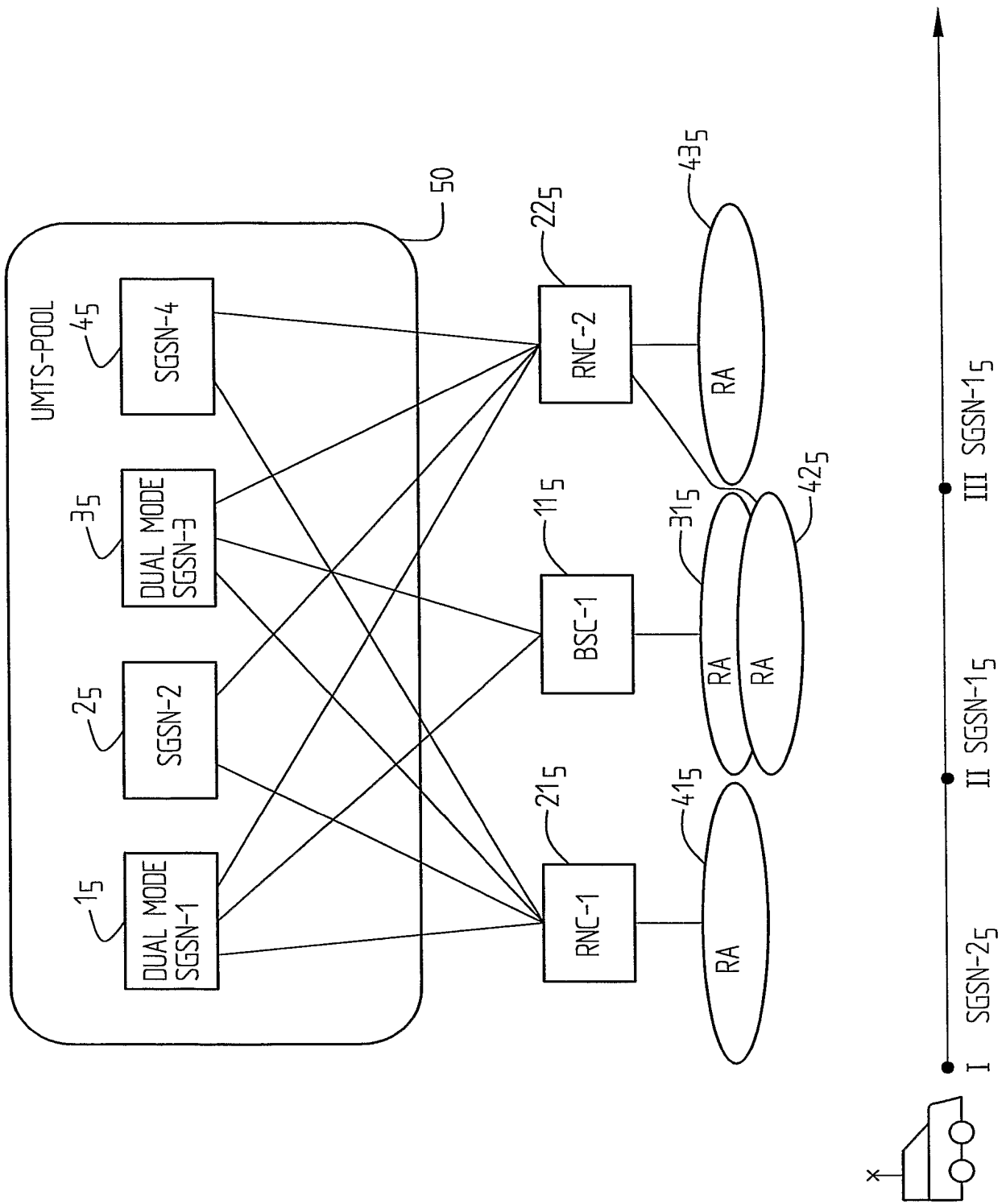


Fig. 6

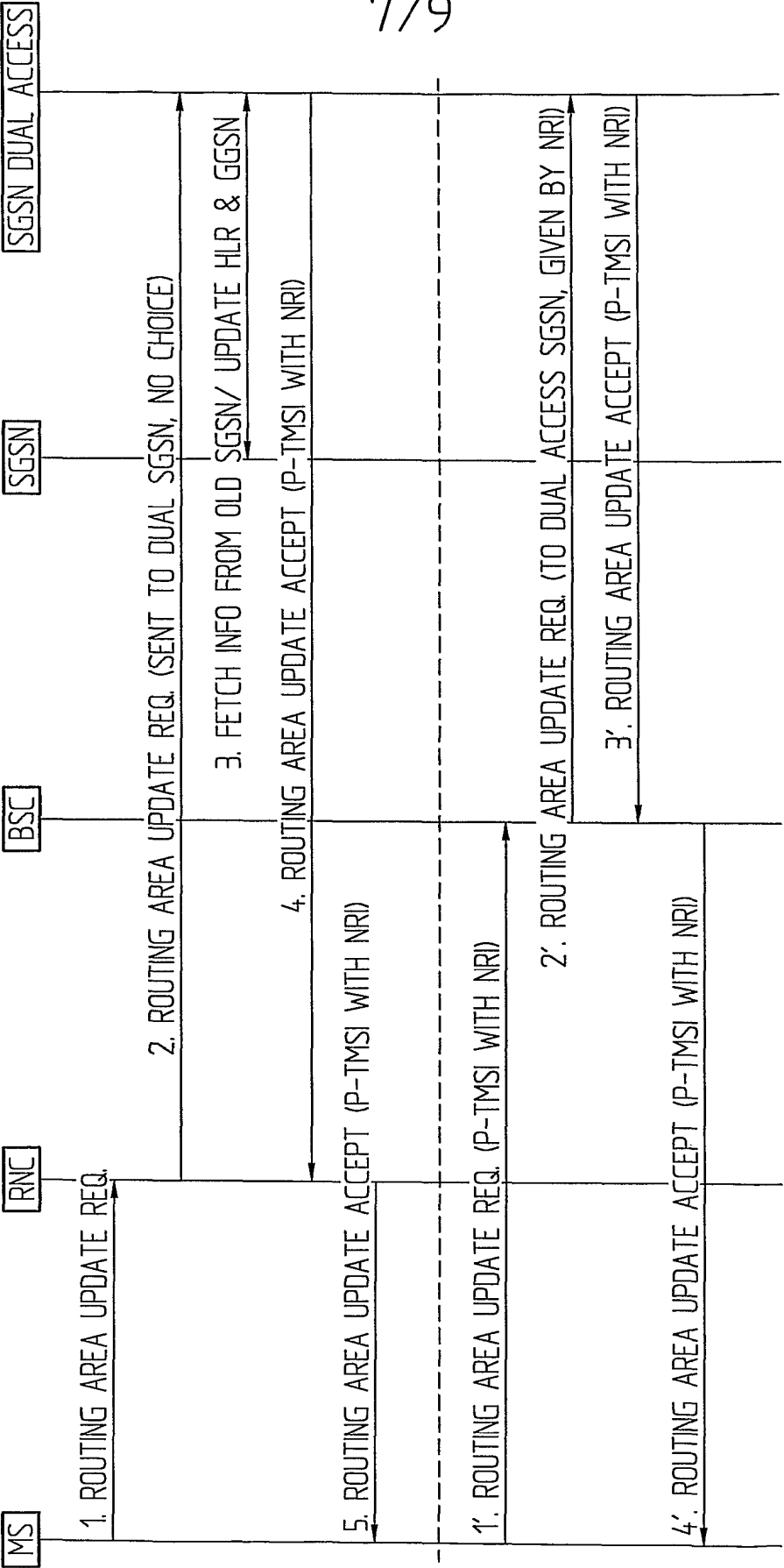
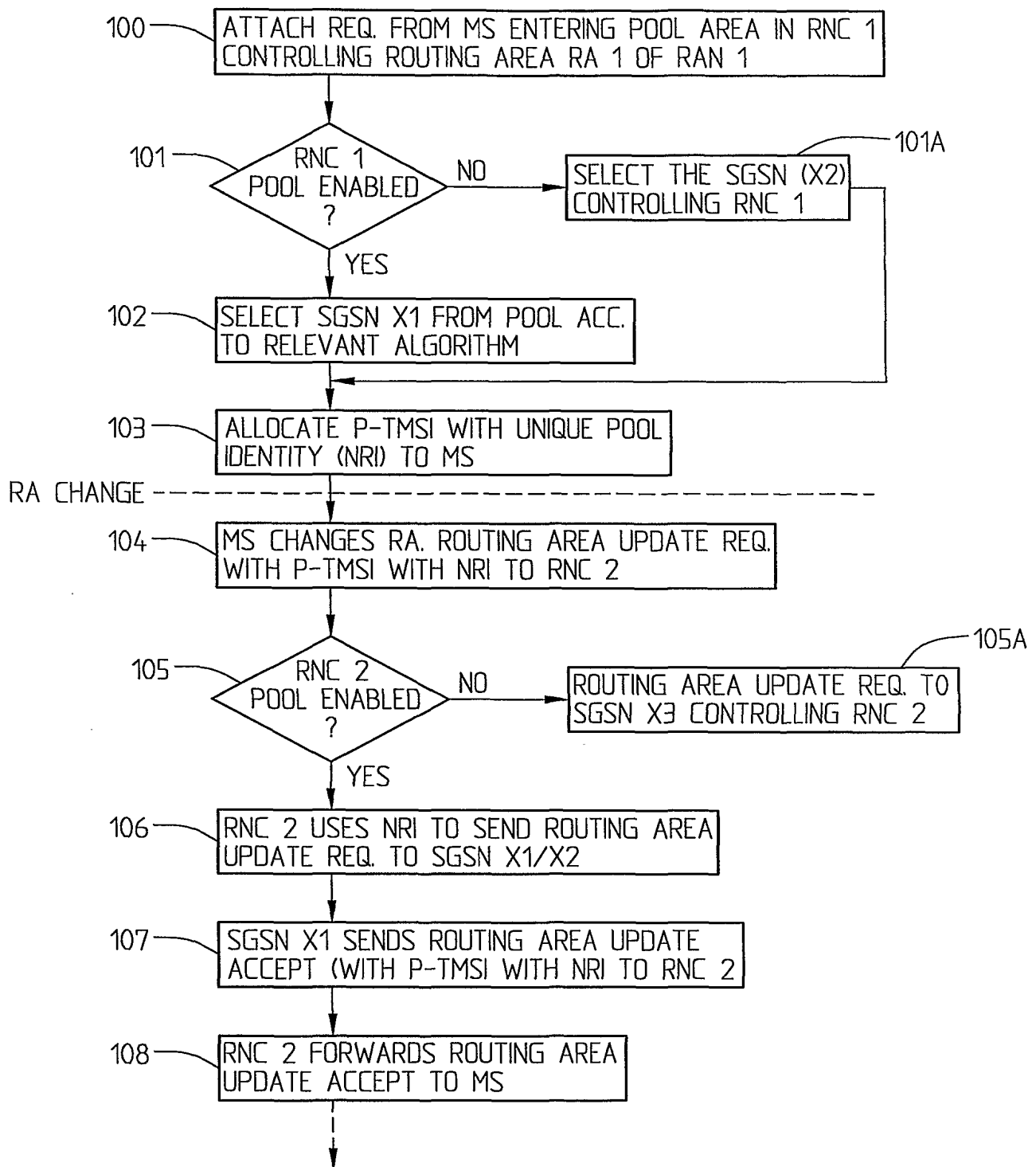


Fig. 7

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*Fig. 8*

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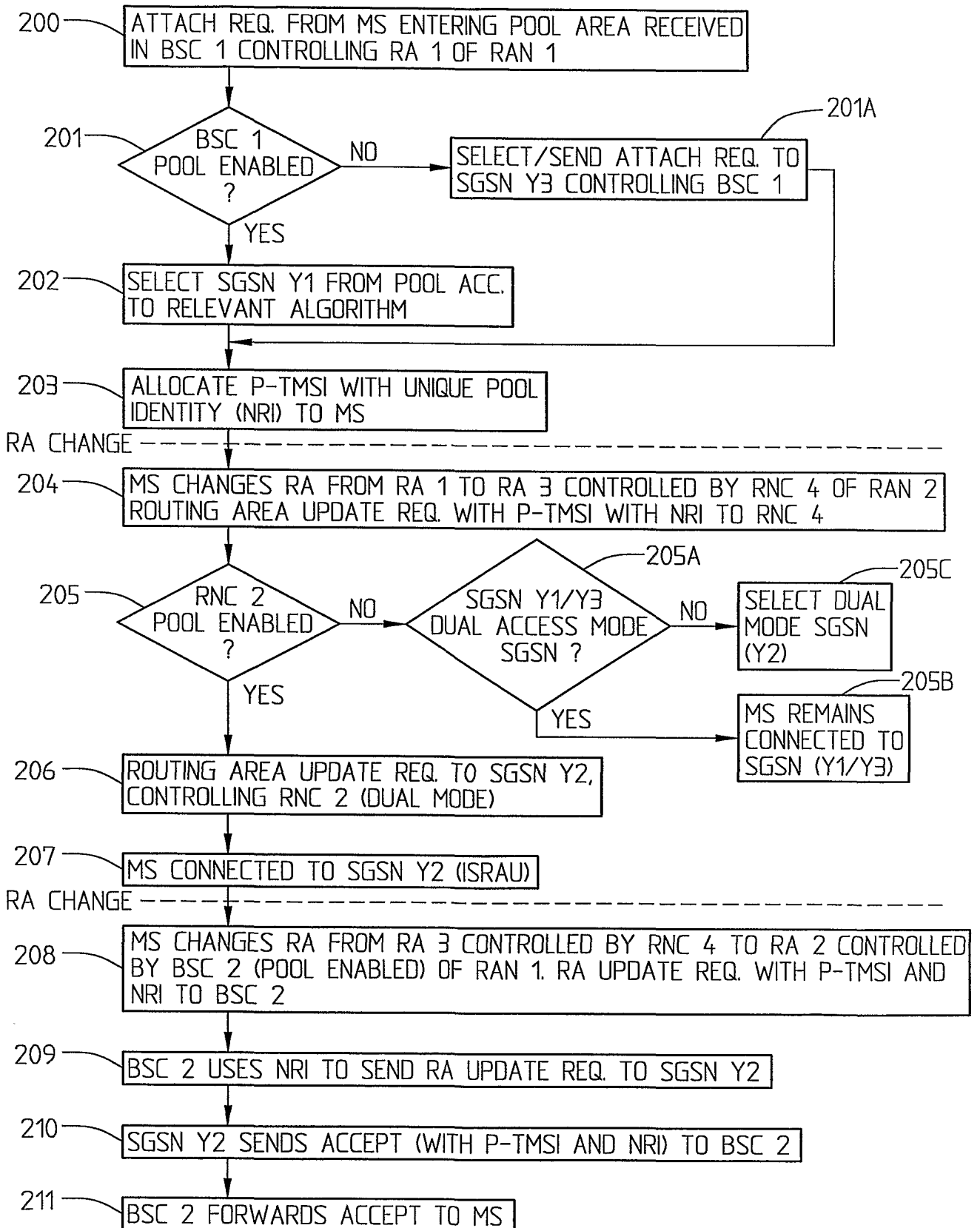


Fig. 9

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/EP 03/14209

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC 7 H04Q7/38		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC 7 H04Q H04L		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used) EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 02 35879 A (LAIHO KEIJO ;TOIVANEN KYOESTI (FI); ERICSSON TELEFON AB L M (SE);) 2 May 2002 (2002-05-02) page 1, line 30 -page 5, line 6 page 9, line 13 -page 10, line 14 page 13, line 30 -page 14, line 9; figure 2A	1-31
A	--- WO 03 103325 A (LONGONI FABIO ;SERNA PEDRO (ES); NOKIA CORP (FI)) 11 December 2003 (2003-12-11) page 4, line 15 - line 22 page 5, line 12 - line 30 page 11, line 1 - line 14 abstract --- <div style="text-align: center;">-/--</div>	1-31
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patent family members are listed in annex. </div>		
* Special categories of cited documents : <div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p> </div> </div>		
Date of the actual completion of the international search <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">1 June 2004</div>		Date of mailing of the international search report <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">29. 06. 2004</div>
Name and mailing address of the ISA European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016		Authorized officer <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">STEFAN HANSSON/JAA</div>

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat. Application No PCT/EP 03/14209

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>US 2002/123365 A1 (WESTERGAARD DAVID J ET AL) 5 September 2002 (2002-09-05) paragraph [0141] - paragraph [0155] -----</p>	1-31

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 03/14209

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 0235879	A	02-05-2002	AU 9253101 A WO 0235879 A1	06-05-2002 02-05-2002
WO 03103325	A	11-12-2003	WO 03103325 A1	11-12-2003
US 2002123365	A1	05-09-2002	NONE	